

REMARKS

Claims 12-32 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Fig. 20 is corrected, claims 12-14, 16-21 and 23-28 are amended, and claims 29-32 are added. The claims are amended to overcome the rejections. No new matter is added. Regarding claims 14 and 16, see e.g., page 57, line 17 - page 61, line 21. In addition, non-elected, withdrawn claims 1-11 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter.

I. Amendment of Inventorship

The Examiner is requested to grant the attached Amendment of Inventorship, which deletes one of the inventors, Seiji FUJITSUKA, due to the cancellation of non-elected claims 1-11.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants request the Examiner to consider the two references submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith.

III. Formal Matters

The Examiner is thanked for identifying the informality, and appropriate correction, to Fig. 20. The attached replacement Fig. 20 changes the reference numeral of the substrate stage from "103" to "106" as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 12, 13, 23 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants submit that the above amendments to the claims overcome this rejection.

The Examiner is thanked for identifying a proposed revision to claim 12, which has been made in this Amendment. In addition, claim 23 has been amended to eliminate the questioned terminology.

IV. All Pending Claims are Patentable

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 12, 13, 17, 20, 21 and 25.

Claim 12 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner, and thus is in condition for allowance, along with its dependent claim 13.

Claims 17, 20, 21 and 25 have been rewritten in independent form. Please note that claim 20 has been amended to incorporate the features of its previous independent claim 16, but does not include the features of claim 19, from which it previously depended. Similarly, claim 25 has been rewritten to incorporate the features of its previous independent claim 14, but does not include the features of claim 24, from which it previously depended. Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 17, 20, 21 and 25, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable.

Claims 14-16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 26 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,854,671 to Nishi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

While Nishi discloses four movable blades BL1-BL4, the blades of Nishi merely move in accordance with the shape of the reticle. Nishi does not disclose or suggest synchronously changing a size of the illumination region in a direction intersecting with the synchronous moving direction of the substrate during the synchronous movement of the mask and substrate at a time of exposure in order that a locus of an end of the illumination region on the substrate is extended in a direction different from the synchronous moving direction, as recited in independent claims 14 and 16. Nishi also does not disclose or suggest moving the illumination region in a direction intersecting with a synchronous moving direction of the substrate during synchronous movement at the time of exposure as recited in independent claim 31. Accordingly, these claims, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable over Nishi.

Claims 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,591,958 to Nishi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

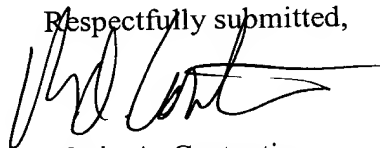
In Nishi, the light shielding plates 138 and 139 are moved at the time of start and finish of the exposure to prevent unnecessary exposure of the substrate. Nishi does not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of independent claims 14, 16 and 31. Accordingly, these claims, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable over Nishi.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Mario A. Costantino
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MAC/ccs

Attachments:

Replacement Fig. 20
Amendment Transmittal
Petition for Extension of Time
Information Disclosure Statement
Request to Amend Inventorship

Date: May 12, 2003

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